A DIVINE THEATER, OR, A Stage for CHRISTIANS:

Delivered
In a Sermon at CHRIST-CHURCH in *OXFORD*.

By
JOHN WALL, Doctor in Divinity, and Præbendary of *Christ-Church*.

Videte quàm suavis sit Dominus. Psal. 34. 8.

OXFORD,
Printed by H. HALL, for RI: DAVIS.
1662.

A DIVINE CHARACTER,

OR,

A Scope for CHRISTIANS:

Delivered

In a Sermon at Christ-Church in OXFORD,

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1653.

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
FATHER IN GOD,
GEORGE
Lord Bishop of
WORCESTER;
My very much Honour'd
LORD:
Increase of Grace here, and
Glory hereafter.

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

FATHER IN GOD,

GEORGE

Lord Bishop of

WORCESTER;

My very good Honour'd

LORD:

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

RIGHT REVEREND,

THough it be true which SENECA writes, ipsi nobis magnum Theatrum sumus: that every good man

is a Theater to himselfe; and hath somewhat within whereon he may reflect with comfort and delight: using that of Persius *in a sense,*

---Nec te quæsiveris extra:

yet give me leave amongst diverse glorious sights of publicke rejoycings, to exhibit one text of holy Scripture to your view, the faireſt spectacle that ever was presented upon the

Great

Great Amphitheater of the round world: The Salvation of God, the Salvation of Christ; *most worthy to be had* in oculis *and* in osculis (*as my Authour speakes*) *by all such as kisse the Son, and desire to embrace the sweetnesse of divine mercies.*

Non hic Centauros, non Gorgonias, Harpyásve

Invenies, hominem pagina noſtra ſapit.

vel potiùs Deum: *the man that is brought forth with an* Ecce *in the Goſpell* [Behold the man] the Mediatour of God and man, the man Chriſt Ieſus. *O let him be ever in your ſight, that hath made you ſo great a Light, and ſet the luſtre of Your Wiſdome*

and

and Piety, as a Lanthorne in a Watch-tower, or a candle on the house top for direction unto many. My song is with the Prophet DAVID, [*Good lucke have you with Your Honour*] *that runnes after you, though you runne from it: Since it is a good saying, which* Æneas Sylvius *left as an Axiome,* Quòd Viri Dignitatibus,

tibus, non Dignitates Viris, ſunt quærendi; *that men are to be ſought out for præferments, more then præferments by men.*

The Patriark Ioſeph *beareth encreaſe in his name, and is likened to a flouriſhing bough, whoſe branches runne over the wall: may it be ſo with your Lordſhip, while the ſheaves of others bow to*

yours

yours; and men delight (as it were) to behold the Salvation of God in the purity of your Doctrine, and the bleſsed example of a good life, and holy Converſation. For that (as Saint Baſil *writes in a Letter to his brother* Nyſſen) *is both* κτῆμα *and* διανα *an honourable poſſeſsion to thoſe which have it, and a delectable Viſion to all that*

that looke on it.

For my part, I must needs rejoyce, and claime a priviledge therein, when I consider the blessed increase of so choyce a plant, whereof I had the first watering in this Vniversity, *when it was but in the budde; though now it beare much fruit, and may be compared to the Rod of* Aaron *which sent forth ripe Almonds.*

We

We read of Plato, quòd Socrati, illo discipulo, nihil contigit fœlicius: quòd Athenis, illo cive, nihil glorioſius: *That nothing befell* Socrates *more fortunate then ſuch a Scholar, nothing befell* Athens *more glorious then ſuch a member: Let others make what Parallel they pleaſe, I thinke my ſelfe happy in your*

your Prosperity, and do wish you strength answerable to your burthen, for the Honour of God, and Comfort of your Brethren; that your Graces may be multiplyed with your Honours; and the Spirit of God doubled upon you, as heretofore upon Elizæus: *that you may be as* Napthali *satisfyed with favours; and with* Asher *yeelding royall*

all dainties, or pleasures for a KING; that you may be as the beloved Disciple, on whose breast JESUS leaned when he inspired him with his Oracles; or the blessed Apostle, who was a Vessell of Election ad portandum nomen coram Regibus: *at least in the words of* Homer,

—φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν.

Deare unto Princes, and such

Such as are stiled God's upon earth: studying allwayes prodesse quibus datur præesse, *if* St Bernard *be worth the hearing.*

More desires I have of this kind, which I had rather poure forth in secret, then expose openly.

Tu, quamcunque Deus tibi
fortunaverit horam
Gratâ sume manu.

And

And be pleaſed to receive the humble tender of the fruit wee gather de ligno vitæ (*as Saint* Bernard *ſpeakes*) *from the tree of Life in the mid'ſt of Paradiſe; though herein I may ſeeme to bring Apples to* Pomona, *or as wee have it in the Epigrammatiſt*

Hvblæis apibus Corſica mella dare.

For

For I am not asham'd to professe that I wept for joy when I first read your Coronation Sermon, *to see how divinely it was perform'd, to the Honour of GOD, the delight of His MAJESTY, and the Gracious settlement of Church and State in their Ancient, and Fundamentall Government and Splendour,*

dour, the continuance whereof I do heartily pray for, and reſt

Moſt humbly devoted

to Your Lordſhip in

true Service and

Affection

IOHN WALL.

DEDICATORY.

JOHN WALL.

A *DIVINE* THEATER, OR, A Stage for Christians.

Luke. 3. 6.

All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.

A Diamond cuts a Diamond, and we point one stone that we may part an other: The Word of God

is more pretious then any diamond, like unto the ſtones which *David* tooke out of the brook when he ſmote *Goliah*. If any deſire to convert theſe ſtones into bread for the nouriſhment of the Saints: or to prove himſelfe a workman not aſhamed, that can ὀρθοτομεῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς divide the word of God aright, he muſt compare Scripture with Scripture and point one place (as it were) for the diſtribution and explication of an other.

Hence it is that both the Apoſtle and the Evangeliſts

do often cite the Law and the Prophets: nay Christ himselfe doth frequently urge the bookes of *Moses*. And here Saint *Luke* drawes his Gospell from the mouth of *Isaiah*: and makes it Paraphrasticall if not Identicall with his Prophecy; where it is said: *The voice of one crying in the wildernesse, make streight the way of the Lord; every vally shall be fill'd, and every hill shall be made low, the crooked things shall be made streight, and the rough ways plaine: the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh*

shall see it. Or (as we read) in this present Scripture, *All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.*

These words are both Propheticall and Evangelicall: recorded by *Luke*, but delivered by the Baptist in a Sermon: who was the last Prophet and first Evangelist (as the Fathers have observed) [illegible] (saith learned *Cyrill* of *Ierusalem*) Uniting both Covenants, of Law and Gospell, most eminently in his person. They seeme to be a declaration, or rather indeed a proclamation

of that true *Messias* sent by God, and promised to our Fathers: wherein you have מראה גדול (as *Moses* spake of that flaming bush) a Great sight or a strange vision for the generality of men, and the generations of mankind, to view and speculate with comfort and delight, the glorious Majesty of his Sacred Person whom the Angells of God desire to behold continually. For saith the text, *Omnis caro— All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.*

That which I shall pre-

sent (as it were) from this scene, is,

First, *a Spectacle:* and that is τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.) *The Salvation of God.*

Secondly, *a Manifestation of this Spectacle*; and this is unto flesh: πᾶσα σάρξ to *All flesh* without limitation or exception.

We are all pertakers of this sight, this Vision, this Spectacle, this benediction. *All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.*

Indeed God is well known in *Iury*, and his name is great in *Israel*: but he shall be re-

vealed to the *Gentiles*, and ſhine as a ſtarre unto the nations: the *Iſles* ſhall come unto him, and the ſhips of *Tarſiſh* ſhall bring their children. All men, all ages, all Tribes, all Languages, ſhall come and ſee, and confeſſe, and magnifie the goodneſſe of the Lord, and the Salvation of our God, in the tender bowells of his Son *Chriſt Ieſus*.

I have now clear'd the way of the text, like an other Baptiſt: and made the paths ſtreight (as it were) before you. If the feet of ſuch as

bring glad tidings, were beautifull upon the mountaines, then doubtlesse their lips ought to be full of grace, and their words as hony, that sing of joy, and peace, and glory, and Salvation. The first thing I am here to mention, the *Salvation of God*: the God of our Salvation: and so I begin with the Spectacle which is [illegible] *the Salvation of God.*

That which *Austin* spake of love *dulce verbum, dulcius factum.* And that which the Oratour said of peace. *Dulce nomen, Salutare beneficium* is

most agreeable with *Salvation*: the name of Salvation is sweet and delectable, but the power thereof is healing and comfortable; a precious balme, a Soverainge antidote, a perfect cordiall, a divine amulet against the sting of the Serpent, and the poyson of death: The bundle of Camphire in the Spouses breast; the cluster of grapes in the vines of *Engedi*, that cheere the heart and rejoyce the Spirit of every Christian. And therefore *Iacobs* song was *expectavi*: *O God I have waited for thy Salvation*: And

David's

David's prayer was *visita Domine*– *O Lord visit us with thy Salvation*: But when *Simeon* beheld the Child, and tooke him in his armes, he was ready to depart with joy and brake forth into that cygnean voice, *Now dost thou let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.* What is that but Jesus Christ the Son of God, the desire of the Nations, *the Sun of righteousnesse with healing under his wings?* who is light, and glory, and Salvation (as they are

put

put together in that Elogy of *Simeon*) the light of the *Gentiles* the glory of *Israel*, the Salvation of both, whilst they are reconcil'd in one body; light in his doctrine, glory in his person, Salvation in the power and the efficacy, the merit and the excellency of his triumphant croſſe, and wonderfull redemption. *Salvation* is his name, and Salvation is with him, Salvation is his worke, and Salvation is of him; therefore was he borne, and therefore came he into the world, that he might save

Iudah

Judah from their sins and *Israel* from their transgressions.

St *Bernard* observes in the stile of our *Messias* which is *Jesus Christus Nazarenus* that every word is full of comfort: come to *Jesus*, he gives you life, for that's a Saviour: come to *Jesus Christ*, he gives you a Kingdome, for that's the anointed of God the Father: come to *Jesus Christ* of *Nazareth*, he gives you aboundant sweetnesse and pleasures for ever more, for that signifies a garland of pleasant flowers:

But

But when we have said as much as we can, it will hardly come up to this [illegible] in the text, for that is *Great Salvation*, the Salvation of God, Salvation in the abstract. Indeed the name of God joyned with other termes as an *Hebraisme* doth make an *Auxesis*, and enforce an Emphasis in divers places of holy Scriptures. What doe you understand by the Mountaines of God, but Great Mountaines? and what do you understand by the Cedars of God, but Great Cedars? and what do you understand

derstand by the Sonnes of God, that tooke unto them daughters of men, but Great men, and tall Giants, of huge strength, and vast demensions? In like manner the Salvation of God is a Great Salvation; a mighty Salvation; or, as it is termed by the Prophet *Zacharie*, Κέρας σωτηρίας A horne of Salvation in the house of *David*: in the first chapter of my Evangelist. We read of him in the Prophet *Habacuc*; that he rides upon Horses and *that his chariots bring Salvation*, *Quadriga Evangalii* (as St *Hie-*

rome

rome ſpeakes) the glorious Chariots of the four Evangeliſts, that beare his name, ſpread his truth; declare his righteouſneſſe, and publiſh his Goſpell amongſt the nations. He brings it Originally, they Organically; He authentically, they miniſterially; as ſervants and inſtruments, to him that is the rock and caſtle, the tower, and the fortreſſe, of our *Salvation*.

As for *Moſes*, *Ioſhua*, *Samuel*, *Gedion* and the like Procuratours of outward peace and temporall ſecurity, they were

were men of renown and worthy of honour in their ſeverall Generations; as ſhadowes and figures of Typicall ſemblance: but not to be compar'd with the Man in the Text, whom God hath made ſo ſtrong for himſelfe: the hand of God; the arme of God; the Salvation of God; the power of God: or as he is ſtil'd elſewhere Κεφαλὴ πάσης ἐξουσίας, the head of all power and the firſt-born of every creature.

He that lookes into the bookes of the Heathen, will eaſily ſee the name of [Salvation]

vation] is hardly found in all their writings. They have σωτηρίαν, but they cannot tell what to make of σωτήριον: they have *Salutem*, but they cannot tell what to make of *Salvation*: name and thing are both alike unknown to them: whereas the Psalmist ascribes it to the Son of God for a twofold reason: The one, as he is *Doctor Ecclesiæ*: The other, as he is *Redemptor Ecclesiæ*: First, as a *Great Master* that taught Salvation, and gave knowledge of it by his word, and doctrine; by his life, and conversation,

being the way, the truth, and the life: The way wherein you may walke; the truth wherein you may rest; the life wherein you may rejoyce, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Secondly, *As he is a Gracious Redeemer*, that hath wrought Salvation, and shall deliver his Church from the bondage of Satan: *à culpâ, à maculâ, à pœnâ*, (as the Schoolmen have distinguished:) From sin, and the staine thereof; from sin, and the guilt thereof; from sin, and the paine thereof, in the Great

Con-

Convention of the whole world, before the Tribunall of his justice. The Prophet *David* sayth, he wrought it in the midst of the earth; St *Origen*, that he wrought it again in the midst of the Aire; as well for the Prince thereof, as for the inhabitants of the world.

But this is contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostle; *Christ being risen dyeth not, in that he dyed, he dyed unto sin; in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* And therefore St *Bernard*, is bold to say of him, *impudenti mendacio crucifigit*

Dominum gloriæ, that he doth crucifie the Lord of glory, with the impudent ſcandall of hæreticall blaſphemy. For my part I leave him to that receiv'd Character; *Vbi benè, nemo melius; ubi malè, nemo pejus.* Moſt certain it is, he wrought Salvation in the midſt of the earth, that all Nations may draw unto it, as lines æquidiſtant to their center. And that with incredible love and moſt invincible patience, amid'ſt the indignities, and the contumelies of reproachfull adverſaries, *not with things corruptible as Silver, and gold,*

but

but with the effusion of his owne bloud, as a lamb undefiled, and without spot. The 1, and the 1, of *Peter.*

For Salvation is a fruit, that doth not grow on every tree: *fructus Vitis* (as St *Bernard* hath it) the fruit of the Vine; the bleeding Vine, that was not only bound to the wood of his crosse, but cut, and pierced, and bruſed, and pruned, in that husbandry of God, with the sharpeſt Amputations of his Fathers wrath: To the end that he might verifie, an ancient Propheſy, long since men-

tioned, by the Patriark *Iacob*: *In Sanguine uvæ lavabit stolam*: he ſhall waſh his Coate in wine, and his Cloake in the bloud of grapes: The Coate of his fleſh, and the Cloake of humane ſubſtance, *Geneſis.* 40.

St *Ambroſe* ſpeaking of this Myſtery, will have him to be *Vitis* and *uva* both together: A Vine as he hung upon the tree, and was faſtned to his Croſſe: A Grape in the Opening of his bowells, and the exuberant ſweetneſſe of Divine grace: when he ſent forth the Wine of comfort,

sort, even bloud, and water, for the Redemption of his Church, and Sanctification of his brethren. Then was he the Author of Salvation, when he was made perfect, then and not till then (as we gather from the Scripture.) *Being made perfect, he became the Author of eternall Salvation*: in the 5, and the 6, of the Epistle to the *Hebrewes*. How is that, by easie trials and gentle adventures? Surely no; it cost more to redeem Soules, and therefore saith the Author *He endured it himself: He was sanctified*

through afflictions, and he was perfected through afflictions, sighes, and groanes, sufferings, and afflictions, (in the 1, and the 10, of the same Epistle) His Crosse, was his perfection; and his Passion, was our consummation, the perfection, of his Economy; and the consummation, of our felicity: worthily stiled the Government upon his shoulders.

Whence is that of learned *Augustine*, *Dormit Adam ut fiat Eva; & moritur Christus ut fiat Ecclesia*. The first *Adam* sleeps, that Eve may be

formed, and shaped: The second *Adam* dyes, that his Church may be reformid, and saved. For without bloud, there is no remission; without a Sacrifice, there is no reconciliation. The bloud of Christ, is the redemption of man: the bloud of Christ, is the expiation of sin: the bloud of Christ, is the satisfaction of God: the bloud of Christ, is the patefaction of heaven. Or to give it in the language of St *Bernard*; *Sanguis crucifixi est clavis paradisi*: The bloud of *Iesus*, who was Crucified by the

Iewes;

Iewes; is the only key that unlocks Heaven, and openeth the gates, of that Cœlestiall paradise.

Why then should any seeke unto the creature, before the Creator; that Idoll, of the creature; that nothing, of the creature; like those foolish *Proci*, amongst the *Grecians*; who went to the hand-maid instead of the Mistris? Is not this to desert the Fountaine of Living water, and to dig Cisterns, which hold no water? poore soules how are they deceived, that expect help, from

a broken ſtaffe, and leane wholy upon the reeds of *Ægypt*, that may eaſily break, and run into their hands? Their faith is vaine; their hope is vaine: and we may beſpeak them in the words of a *Heathen*—

una Salus miſeris nullam ſperare Salutem.

Was *Paul* crucified for you, or were you baptized into the name of *Paul*? Nor *Paul*, nor *Cephas*, nor men, nor Angells, were able to emancipate us, without the pow-

er

er of God, and the ſweet Mediation of his Son *Chriſt Ieſus*. Conſider the Generations of old, and looke into the Vanity of former Ages: What are the ſhrines, and the altars; the ſepulchres, and the images, the molten images, the graven images, of all the Saints, and Martyrs, ſince the world began, but ſtrange inventions, and ſtrong deluſions, which many run after to their owne deſtruction? *Galba eſt non Getulicus*; ſaith the Hiſtorian, in a military ſenſe; And truly we may ſay, *Chriſtus*

stus & non Moses, in a Spirituall sense: It is Christ, and not *Moses*: Christ, and not *Aaron*: How much lesse the man of sinne, which sits in the Temple of God, and usurps the chaire as his Vicar at Rome: can heale our greife, or Seale us a Pardon? It is not *Peter*, nor *Paul*: nor *Iames*, nor *Iohn*, must be our defence: but Christ alone, the rocke of our strength, and the God of our Salvatiõ, who was made all things, to all men: though in himselfe constantly One, (without variableness,

or

or ſhadow of change) The ſheep, and the ſheepard; the root, and the flower; the doore, and the Sanctuary; the table, and the candleſtick; A lion, a lamb; a rock, a ſtone; *The ſtone which the builders refuſed: and the ſtone which is made the Head of the Corner*: He it is that is *Deus ſoſpitalis*, in a religious ſenſe: the great præſerver of mankind, by whom we looke for ſafety, and deliverance. And therefore as Chriſt ſaid to *Zachæus*, σήμερον σωτηρία *this day is Salvation come unto thee*: ſo may I ſay to all that heare

me this day is Salvation come unto you; *the Salvation of God, the God of your Salvation.* Come down *Zacheus*, & descend my brethren; come downe haſtily, and receive him joyfully, in the ſound of his Oracles, and the power of his Ordinances, which are daily publiſhed in the mideſt of your Churches. Let *Zacheus* come downe from his extortion, and let all depart from their tranſgreſſion: the proud, from inſolence, the wanton, from dalliance, the ſtrong from violence, and the bloud thirſty

christy from malice: that Christ may find a gracious welcome, and set up his Throne, in every heart, and in every conscience. *The heavens send forth a dew, and the clouds drop righteousnesse*: the earth opens, and brings Salvation; Salvation, and Justice, come forth together: the word of truth, the breast-plate of righteousnesse, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of Salvation: are given to us, as the armour of God, and sent down amongst us, as the Roman *Ancilia*, from the clouds above, *ut inhabitet gloria*

gloria in terrâ nostrâ, That we may triumph among the Saints, and glory may dwell in our land, the 85, of the Prophet *David.* How can you neglect so great Salvation, you that are partakers of a heavenly calling, and do remember *Iesus Christ*, the high Priest of your Ministery, and profession? How can you neglect so great, so eminent, so publick, so evident *Salvation*; in the view of the whole World, and the sight of all the Nations? Since the word incarnate, that was made flesh, is openly revea-

led, and made known to flesh, to *all flesh*, (as you have it, in the text) *All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.* And so I come to my *Second Generall*: *From the Object, to the Evidence; from the Spectacle, to the Manifestation*: *All flesh shall behold the Salvation of God.*

It is a quaint notion, which St *Augustin* hath in a Tract upon *Iohn*, that if you take the first letters, of Ἀνατολή, δύσις, Ἄρκτος, & μεσημβρία, which signifie the foure corners of the World; they make up the name of *Adam*:

to

to ſhew the extent of his nature, and the generality of his perſon; and that *as in Adam all dye, ſo in Chriſt they ſhall be made alive*; all men, all fleſh, from all parts, and from all Coaſts, young and old, male and female, bond and free, Iew and *Gentile*: *They ſhall all ſee the glory of the Lord, and behold the Salvation of our God.*

If it be a pleaſant thing to looke upon the Sun, (as we gather from the words of *Solomon*) what is it to behold the Sun of Righteouſneſſe, and to ſee the face of God, in

his Son *Christ Iesus*, who is the brightnesse of his Glory, and the Character of his Image? It is noted of St *Hierome* that he made a three-fold Option, and desired greatly to have seen, *Paulum in Ore*; *Romam in flore*; *Deum in carne*; *Paul* in the exercise of his Ministery, as he was Preaching; Rome in the Excellencie of her beauty as she was flourishing; and Christ alive in the substance of our Nature, when he tooke flesh, and rode (as it were) on the white cloud of Virgin purity. Blessed

are

are the eyes which see this: many Prophets, and Righteous men, have desired to see it, and could not, as Christ spake of himselfe, in the Gospell of St *Matthew*: and therefore St *Paul*, brings it forth with a kind of Præamble, when he saith [illegible] *Great is the Mysterie of Godlinesse: which is Christ manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angells, Preached to the Gentiles, and received into Glory.*

As for the substance of the Divine nature it is most invisible, not to be seen with eyes

of flesh; being all Majesty, all Glory; that such as pry into the one, may be overwhelmed with the other. *Moses* sought it, and besought God for it, but was never able to get a sight of it: *Vidit Angelum, vidit nubem,* (as we have it in St. *Augustin*) he saw an Angell, he saw a cloud; he saw fire, and he saw smoake, with the like Creatures, of a visible nature: but did he ever see the glorious Majesty of the living God? Surely no, he was faine to get into the cleft of the rock, before he might be

allowed

allowed to see his back parts: Yet was he so beloved of God, that he tooke him into the Mount, and talked with him, as a man speaketh to his friend: but when he cryed, shew me thy glory, the Lord gave him a round answer, and told him plainly לא תוכל לראות פני *Thou canst not see my face*, and againe, *my face shall not be seen. Exod*: 33: Consonent to that in the holy Gospell, *No man hath seen God at any time*, *Iohn* the first, and the eighteenth. Whence is that golden saying, of a Golden

ſpeaker, (I meane *Cryſologus*) *Quem non capit mundus, quomodo poteſt oculus?* how can the ball of the eye receive him, whom the ball of the whole World is not able to comprehend? Yet ſince the inviſible things of God, are manifeſt by the creature, that which is inviſible in it ſelfe, may be viſible by an other: a Heavenly ſubſtance, by an earthly ſubſtance; a Spirituall ſubſtance, by a corporall ſubſtance: the Divinity, by the humanity; the Godhead, by the man-hood; ἀΐδιος δύναμις καὶ θειότης, that Æternall

nall power, and God-head mentioned by the Apostle, in the first to the *Romans*.

Hence it is, that God sent his only Sonne, borne of a woman, made under the Law, that he might visit us, and we contemplate him; being flesh, of our flesh; and bone, of our bone. And because the *Gentiles* made them Idols, in likenesse of men, out of a desire to see what they did but vainly worship: He gave his word incarnate as a liveing image, that he might steale the honour to himselfe, and draw

it

it privily away, λανθανόντως (as St *Chrysostom* hath observed) not in the forme of a *Cherub*, or by the conveiance of any Cœlestiall body, taken from above, and brought along with him (as the *Valentinians* doe imagine) but in the clothing of our humanity; and that as you have in the words of *Nyssen* δία παρθενικῆς ἀρθρείας by the rare fœcundity of a chaste Virgin, whom the Prophet *Ezekiel* hath compared to the gate of the Sanctuary, *that was never open; because the Lord God of* Israel *did enter by it*, Ezekel, 44.

Of

Of the word, he became flesh; of God, man; of the Creatour, a creature; of Lord and Master, a servant and minister: higher then Angels, if we looke unto the glory of his Æternall generation; but lower then Angels, if we consider the frailty of his temporall conception: when he left the bosome of his Father, that he might Sanctifie the Wombe of his Mother, and come forth of those chambers, Holy, and undefiled: with the tender bowels of mercy, and loving kindnesse, in a

true

true ſenſe, and brotherly feeling of our miſeries, and imperfections: *Natus mirabiliter ſine peccato pro damnatis miſerabiliter cum peccato*; (in the language of St *Auſtin*) borne ſtrangly without ſin, for ſuch as were to periſh lamentably in ſinne; the guilt of ſin, and the confuſion of their iniquities.

Theſe, *are the kiſſes of the mouth*, which the *Spouſe* deſired, in the bleſſed conjunction of both natures, for the infuſion of grace, and the ſweet inſpiration of heavenly comfort: *Oſculetur me oſculo*

culo oris sui. Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth, the first, and the first, of the song of *Solomon*: the deare Kisses of his Love, and of his Mercy; of his favour, and of his bounty; derived to us from that admirable dispensation, of the incarnate Deity. The Fathers, of the Greek Church, call it συγκατάβασιν and ἐνανθρώπησιν, or more plainly, συγκατάβασιν, a voluntary condescention, of the Divine excellence; when God descends, from the height of Majestie, that he may be incorporate with man; and

man

man ascends, from the depth of miserie, that he may be joyned with God, and assumed to him, in the unity of his person.

For saith *Austin*; *Assumpsit humanitatem non amisit divinitatem*: he kept his Divinity, though he tooke out humanity; this was advanced, that was not prejudiced; there came Honour to the one, without Detriment to the other; whil'st he proves the life of men, and yet remaines the head of Angels.

There are many prævisi-

ons

ons of this myſtery, in the holy Patriarkes, and not a few prædictions, in the Oracles of the Prophets. The Tabernacle of *Moſes*, was a direct figure of it; of this Tabernacle, this building, the Tabernacle of God, the Tabernacle of his fleſh: The *Iſraelites* ſaw his glory, in the former; we ſaw it in the latter. *Vidimus gloriam ejus*, (ſaith *John* the Evangeliſt) We have ſeen the glory thereof, it hath opened our eyes, clarified our hearts, enlightned our minds, purified our conſci-

encies:

encies: *Vidimus gloriam ejus*; We have seen the glory thereof, *As the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and of Truth.* For indeed, there must needs be ἀληθινὴ σκηνοπηγία (as *Nyssen* speakes) a true, reall, perfect, substantiall building of the Tabernacle; where there is Christ in the flesh, and God with us; a true Saviour, a peculiar *Immanuel*, who shall not only renew, and Sanctifie; but repaire, and Glorifie the decayed Tabernacles of our mortall bodyes, by the Virtue of his Spirit, and the

Om-

Omnipotency of his Godhead.

Hence it is, that we are enabled to see God; and thus it is, we are said to behold the Lord of glory: though in himself he be undiscernable, and dwell in light that is unapproachable. He tooke that from us, and preserves that in us, which makes him known to us, and beloved of us: and therefore, since he comes in the vaile of flesh, and seems to be covered, as with the mantle of *Elias*, we have boldnesse to draw nere, and looke up-

on him, as the Sun in a cloud, or a candle in a Lanthorne, tempered, and qualified, to the weakneſſe of our ſight, and the infirmities of our nature. Which makes the *Spouſe*, breake forth into thoſe myſticall expreſſions, *My beloved ſtand's behind the wall; he looketh forth of the window, and ſhews himſelfe by the latteſſe*; the ſecond, and the ninth of *Salomon*. What's that but the wall of humane fleſh, the window of humane ſenſe, and the latteſſe of humane affections? (as St *Bernard* interprets) where-

by

by he lookes upon us, and we looke upon him, with Spirituall glances, and heavenly dartings of saving knowledg, and mutuall complacence, crying (as it were, in the words of *Iacob*) *I have seene the face of God, and my life is preserved*: at what time he set a marke on the place, and named it *Peniel*, (which doth signify the face of God,) for a token, of inward gladnesse, and everlasting remembrance: *Gen:* 32. *Quanta bonitas, quanta dilectio, quanta humilitas, quanta dignatio* (as S. Ber-

Bernard) O the bountyfulneſſe, and love of God to man! who is able to conceive the length, and the bredth; the height, and the depth of his infinit kindneſs, when he did not only, *bow the Heavens, and come downe*, but empty himſelfe, and goe back like the Sun in the Dial of *Ahaz*, many degrees, that he might give us a ſigne, from the conception of a Virgin, and reſtore us to life, by the power of his Salvation?

There are many reſults of Practicall Holineſſe, from

ſo

ſo great Philanthropie, ſo great humanity; which the Apoſtle ſays, hath appeared to us: Even Praiſe, and honour, and Thankſgiving, and Obedience; with love unfeigned, from a pure heart, and a good conſcience. I with it may be an incentive to them all; but cheifly unto love, the bond of perfectneſſe and the moſt imitable quality of the Divine nature. That as God loved us, ſo ye love one another; that ye deſcend to the infirmities of your Brethren, and take up their burthens; that ye vi-

fite the Churches of the Saints, and releive their wants: the rather indeed, becauſe we are but fleſh, weake and fraile, paſſible and mortall, or (toſpeake in the language of St *Auguſtine*) *Sperma fœtidum, vas ſtercorum, eſca vermium*: a lump of clay, the ſpawne of *Adam*, a ſeed of evill doers, and veſſells of corruption: Yet ſuch as God hath reſpect unto, in the Diſpenſation of his Grace, and the Manifeſtation of his Glory. For it is not ſaid, every Soul, or every Spirit; but *All Fleſh ſhall behold*

the

the Salvation of God: where the part is taken for the whole, and the worſe for the better, to ſhew that God doth not forſake man, in the vileſt eſtate of a miſerable condition, but conſiders him as *Fleſh*, and viſits him in his bloud, that he may raiſe, and quicken him with the *Quatridian Lazarus*; though dead, and buried, in the grave of ſinne; and the pollution of his iniquities.

For, *He came to ſave that was loſt*, as he tells you in the eighteenth, of St *Mathew*;

Not to cure the whole, but the sick; not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Publicans, and Harlots, Theives, and Malefactors, Blaſphemers, and Hypocrites, Extortioners, and Oppreſſours: a Generation of Vipers, a brood of Serpents, (as we gather from many places in the Goſpell) to ſeeke the loſt groat, to find the loſt ſheep, to reclame the loſt child, to reduce the loſt Son, to exhilerate, and delight the glorious Angels with notice of their converſion, ſince there is joy in heaven, with the

An-

Angels of God, for one Sinner that repenteth. And therefore it is noted of the *Spouse* that she was *nigra & formosa*, beloved at the worst, and comely when she was black: by nature black, by grace comely: black without, comely within; black in her selfe, comely in him that is more beautifull, then all the sons of men, the joy of the whole earth, and the glory of heaven: So that we may hope beyond hope, and not be out of comfort, in our deformity; crying with the Poet, in a Divine sense –

Al-

Alba ligustra cadunt vaccinia nigra leguntur.

As for the Text, where it mentions [*all Flesh*] with a note of Universality, in a larger sense, it must not be understood of Numericall persons, but of severall conditions by way of distribution, *in Genera Singulorum* (as the Schoolemen interpret) for though God be in the mid'st of us, yet doth he not sanctifie all particulars (as we may see by that Devill *Iudas.*) The Sun may

rise,

riſe, and ſhine glorioufly; though not diſcern'd by ſuch as are blind, and ſhut up in a dungeon: in like manner, light may come into the world, and not be comprehended by the darkneſſe thereof; or known to thoſe whom the God of this world hath blinded. *Purga oculum ut videre poſſis lucem oculorum* (ſaith learned *Auguſtine*) cleanſe thine eyes, and purifie thy heart, that ſo thou mai'ſt behold the light of thine eyes, and the joy of thy heart; *for none ſhall ſee God but the pure in heart.* Therefore Chriſt

Christ is said to redeem the Saints out of every Tribe, and country, and language, and Nation: where the particle is most emphaticall, and worthy observation, Ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς not every Tribe, but *Out of every Tribe, and Country, and Language and Nation* (as we are taught, by St *Iohn*, in the fifth chap: of the *Revelat:*) *Iews*, and *Græcians*, *Cretes*, and *Arabians*; they shall all heare, they shall all see the Wonders of God, and the Power of his *Salvation*. They which liv'd before, with Corporall eyes, they which come after with Spi-

Spirituall eyes, the eyes of faith, and knowledge, and a right understanding of Heavenly Mysteries. They shall beleive, and see; they shall tast, and see by true experience, and sure evidence, how good the Lord is in the remission of sin, and the free donation of æternall Righteousnesse: *For the Promise is made to us, and to our Children, and to such as are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Acts: the 2. and the 39.

This Doctrine is most agreeable with the meaning of

of the Baptiſt, who was a præcurſor to our Lord and Saviour in his firſt coming: though ſome extend the words to his latter coming, when Chriſt ſhall be manifeſt to us, and we ſhall be manifeſt to him, before the Tribunall of his Juſtice. But I wave that as ſomewhat indirect, and deſire much, you would Suck the milke of Divine truth, from the breaſts of conſolation, that are open to you by the revelation of *Chriſt Ieſus*, and the ſweet influence of his Evangelicall mercies; when he came

came as raine into a fleec of wooll, and did firſt viſit us with his Corporall præſence. *Gabrill* came, the Angels ſang, the Babe ſprang, the Aire rang, and a fountain of Oyle brake forth in the midſt of the earth as a ſigne to all the Nations; a miraculous ſigne of flowing bounties, and healing mercies. It is not to be imagined that any man now living, ſhould have ſeen him with bodily eyes, (unleſſe it were *Iohannes de temporibus* as ſome conceit) that was taken up to Heaven in a cloud above ſix-

teen

teen hundred yeares agoe. But if we consider the power of his Salvation, that came forth of *Sion* in perfect beauty; the whole earth is full of it, and we of this Land have found it, above other Nations in a singular way, and peculiar manner: *Sicut audivimus, sic vidimus*, As we have heard, so we have seen; in the City of our God, in the City of our King: Salvation Corporall, Salvation Spirituall; the one of the Soul from Hærefy, and distraction; the other of the Body from Calamity, and de-

destruction: while there are no tumults, no fightings, no violence, no complaining in our streets. *Blessed are the people that are in such a case, blessed are the people that have the Lord for their God.* Is it not a precious thing, to see Holinesse, and order meet together; Doctrine, and Discipline kisse each other? Thanks be to God we enter the Sanctuarie, and go to his Altars, heare the word, and partake of his Mysteries, without the disturbance of Lunatick men, and Fanatick spirits, *That Israel may rejoyce*

in him that made him, and the Children of Sion be joyfull in their King. There was a time when the Heavens were shut, and the Seales of grace (in a manner) seal'd up by a marveilous restraint of Sacramentall Dispensations; but now we see them open again, with that blessed Saint, and Proto Martyr *Stephen*, when he beheld the Son of man at the right hand of God having a great light round about as the Apostle had at his conversion, the light of joy, and comfort, safety, and deliverance.

When

When the wise men came to *Ierusalem*, they cryed out *Vidimus stellam ejus*, *We have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him*: in like manner, we that are inhabitants of this Mysticall *Ierusalem*, may cry out, *Vidimus stellam ejus*, We have seen his starre, and that as it were in the *East*, from the Orient all presence of our rising Sun, and the sweet reduction of our Gracious Soveraign: The starre of his Word, the influence of his Grace, the light of his Truth, the motion of his Providence, the working of

his Power, the power of his Doctrine, the brightneſſe of his Goſpell, and the glory of his Kingdome, that Evangelicall Kingdome, whereby he doth rule in the heart of every Chriſtian. O that we might as truly ſay, we are come to worſhip, and to ſerve him with Singleneſſe of heart, and Purity of mind, in the beauty of Holineſſe, and the fervency of our Spirit! But alſo ſeare we come ſhort of thoſe performances, and do not preſent him, as the men of the Eaſt are laid to have done, with Gold,

Myrrh,

Myrrh, and Frankinsense: the Gold of Faith, and Heavenly wisdome; the Myrrh of Repentance, and bitter Contrition; the Frankinsense of Prayer, and hearty Devotion.

Where is the Honour, and the Worship; the Duty, and the Service; the Labour, and the Patience; the Tribute, and the Obedience we owe to the Power of so Great a Majestie? Instead of all these we do often meet with contempt, and infidelity; profaneness, and impiety: whilst some despise; others

deride the Grace, which brings Salvation with it: placing themselves, (as the Prophet hath it, מושב לצים) in the Chaire of pride, or the Seate of the scornfull: not unlike unto those, *Who laughed, and said, hail King of the Jewes, if thou be the Son of God come down from the crosse: he saved others, himselfe he cannot save.* I tremble to recount, and am afraid to mention that Execrable speech, which a Pope used to one of his Cardinalls, when he said *quantum nobis profuit de Christo fabula?* Curled A-

theists,

theists, and Prodigy of men.

Dic quâ Tysiphone, quibus exagitare colubris?

What aileth thee to Blaſpheme the Lord of Glory? haſt thou more Devills in thy heart, then were caſt out of *Mary*? God forbid any Chriſtian ſhould ever harbour ſo vile a thought, and yet the Apoſtle ſayes, there ſhall be mockers in the laſt Dayes, denying the Lord that bought them: we alſo find by experience that ma-

ny live as if they tooke the Myſtery of Godlyneſſe, for a Hiſtory of deceivableneſſe; and held the Goſpell of the Kingdome little better than a Golden Legend.

But let theſe Men know, there is an (*auferatur impius*) for the wicked; and though God be merciful to the penitent Soul, they which provoke the eyes of his Glory ſhall never ſee it, in the 26th Chapter of the Prophet *Iſaiah*. Oh how ſuddenly do they conſume, periſh, and come to a fearful end (as the

Pſal-

Pſalmiſt ſpeaks with condoling admiration.)

Amongſt divers inſtances of Divine Juſtice, that of *Alexander* the ſixth is very famous, who invited his Cardinals to a great Feaſt, with an intent to poyſon them for their means; and being very frolick, dyed lamentably in the midſt of his joviality, of a poyſon'd cup which he provided for others; by the Providentiall miſtake of his owne ſervants: (as you have it recorded in his life by *Onuphrius*)

—*Nec*

—Nec enim lex justior ulla est
Quàm necis artifices arte perire suâ.

Beware then my deare brethren of profane Scurrility, and mischievous practises, whereby God is dishonour'd, or man injured, *That you turne not the Grace into wantonnesse, which teaches us to deny ungodlinesse; and make that an occasion of falling which is given for a blessing.* The rather indeed be-

cause

cause St *Paul* will not so much as allow of εὐτραπελία, or εὐτραπελία, in the fifth Chapter of his Epistle to the *Ephesians* when men delight in that which is not comely, as spots, & blots, in the feasts of Charity: and care not to make themselves ridiculous Motio's; so they may others merry, with the offence, and scandall of their Brethren: though in the Sanctuary of God, and the very midst of his most Holy Temple, where they should put off the shoes, (as it were) of foule reproach, and not

defile

defile it with unsavoury pollutions; as they may learne from a meer *Heathen*—

—Sacer est locus, extra
Mei—

Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not, to say no more then he doth in a gentle reproofe to the *Corinthians*: Howbeit ye know that our Saviour Christ, had a whip for grosse profaners of the Temple.

The best use we can make of Divine bounty, and

Evan-

Evangelicall mercy, is a good life and honeſt converſation in the feare of God, and the duties of Religion. O kiſſe the Son, and bleſſe the God of your Salvation, who tooke of our fleſh, that he might give us of his Spirit, and poure it forth abundantly upon all fleſh, Men, and Women, Fathers, and Children, Princes, and Nobles, Rulers, and Servants. *For God is no accepter of Perſons, but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſſe is accepted of him.* The tenth

Chap-

Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*. Without doubt their hearts are of stone, and not of flesh; that do not melt, and dissolve with a sense of this Kindnesse. He Descends, that we may Ascend; Ascend, and Descend upon the Sonne of man, Ascend in Love, and the height of Contemplation: Descend in Obedience, and the Humility of Subjection (as it is said of the Glorious Angels in the first Chapter of St *Iohn* the Evangelist.) If you would learne the manner, and desire to know the

wings

wings that bring him to us, they are as the wings of a Dove; *Whose wings are of Gold, and whose feathers are of Silver: in argento Humanitas, in auro Divinitas* (saith Elegant *Bernard*) by wings of Gold, we understand the power of his God-head; by feathers of Silver, the purity of his Man-hood: the Gold, and the Silver, that meet together in the Royall Person of our Gracious Mediatour, and most Precious Redeemer.

When the Seales of the booke in the *Revelation* were

were opened, there was a voice heard as the noise of Thunder, saying *Come and see*: I have loosed the Seales of the Text, and displaid the Treasures thereof; the Love of God, the Salvation of Christ, the Riches of his Grace, the Sweetnesse of his Peace, and reconciling Merites: Give me leave to round your eares, and to rouse your Spirits as a Sonne of Thunder, in the same Language *Come and see*, come and Sing; *O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us Heartily rejoyce in the strength*

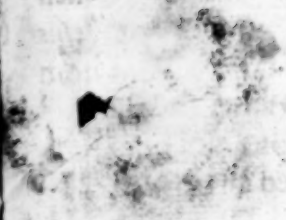
of

of our Salvation: With Psalmes, and Hymnes of Divine praise, and Jubilat exultancies. Who would not adore him that is Magnified by all the powers of Heaven, though he tooke not Angels, but the seed of *Abraham*. Was *Alpha*, shall be *Omega*; was the First, shall be the Last; was the Beginning, shall be the End, the End of our Hope, the Consummation of our Happynesse? Give him the Honour due unto his Name, the Name of *Iesus*, the Name of a Saviour, wherein we

rejoyce, and whereby we Triumph over the greatest adversaries: As his Name is, so let his Praise be Great, and wonderfull, publike and universall in all Churches; and in all places: let his Saints praise him, let all his Saints praise him with Melody, and with joyfulnesse. Crying aloud In the words of the *Magnificat*, *He that is Mighty, hath done great things for us, and Holy is his name*: Sometimes with the Glorious Cherubims in Anthems, and Antiphonies, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of*

Hosts,

Hosts; Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory. Sometimes with the blessed Elders in Elogies and Doxologies, *Salvation and Honour, Wisdome and Power, be to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever*; The *Lamb* that came to us in a cloud of flesh, that all might see him; the *Lamb* that shall come in the clouds of Heaven, that all may find him: they which have done ill, to their greife; they which have done well, to their comfort, in the Visions of

Peace, and the sweet Fruition of his Beatificall presence for ever more. Which the Lord grant, for *Jesus Christ* his sake; To whom with the Father and the Son, three Persons, and one God, be Ascribed all Power, Majesty, and Dominion, this day, and for ever. *Amen.*

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